

MINUTES

KALAMAZOO COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

APRIL 16, 2013

PLACE: Room 207A, County Administration Building

TIME: 4:00 p.m. – 6:22 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Commissioners Carolyn Alford, Dave Buskirk, Jeff Heppler, Brandt Iden, Dave Maturen, Julie Rogers, Michael Seals, Phil Stinchcomb, John Taylor, Roger Tuinier and John Zull.

MEMBERS ABSENT: None.

OTHERS PRESENT: Peter Battani, John Faul, Thom Canny, Tracie Moored, Lisa Bradshaw, Jason Gainsley, Lotta Jarnefelt, Lee Adams, Tim Snow, Jean Michaud, Tina Keifer, Lynn Kirkpatrick, Sue Darling, Jeff Getting, Judge Bridenstine, Judge Westra, Maurice Evans, Ed Sackley, Claudette Reid, Paulette Reid and Tina Becker.

Chairman Maturen convened the Committee of the Whole at 4:00 p.m.

1. Review of Transfers and Disbursements

Ms. Tracie Moored, Finance Director stated claims for April 16, 2013 totaled \$1,499,505.94.

2. Amendment to District Court Consolidation Agreement

Mr. Peter Battani, County Administrator provided a handout proposing to amend the District Court Consolidation Agreement. He indicated District Court could not operate 3 facilities and under the agreement the County would pay the City of Portage \$70,000/year for 10 years to cover the City of Portage's costs. He stated currently the County pays \$40,500 in rent and maintenance costs to the facility. He indicated the County was now in a place where history, finances and current circumstances, especially with the eliminated position of judgeship, the District Court could no longer operate in 3 facilities. He stated no action would be taken at this time but Administration would be asking for formal approval at the May 7 Board of Commissioners meeting.

Commissioner Taylor arrived at 4:06 p.m.

Commissioner Heppler arrived at 4:10 p.m.

Commissioner Rogers questioned where the \$40,500 maintenance costs came from?

Commissioner Zull stated he was on the Portage City Council when the original agreement was made. At that time he stated he was puzzled that the agreement could put a court in Portage in perpetuity. He stated times and circumstances had changed and adjustments needed to be made. He stated he felt everyone would benefit and money would be saved by closing the court..

Commissioner Stinchcomb stated he would support this on behalf of the tax payers who would be saving money although he wasn't convinced if numbers were correct in his mind.

Ms. Claudette Reid stated the City of Portage would like to have a court in Portage and was disappointed this change needed to be made but she understood. She stated it was a reasonable way to move forward with the consolidation.

Commissioner Seals stated he felt this was a win win for Portage, the county and the courts, especially sobriety court and indicated he would support this proposal.

Administrator Battani stated he understood the difficulty some Commissioners may have with this. He stated the County would not be where they were at without the City of Portage, particularly with Mr. Maurice Evans and Ms. Claudette Reid. He stated everyone was struggling to continue to foster intergovernmental cooperation with other issues as time went on. He stated he felt it was the appropriate, respectful thing to do; move on and use as foundation to build on.

Commissioners Tuinier and Iden arrived at 4:17 p.m.

Commissioner Taylor stated he wasn't necessarily for or against the proposal, but wasn't completely happy with the price tag. He stated \$70,000 for 10 years was way too much for what the county would be getting.

Commissioner Alford questioned how the move would help the people the courts serve.

Judge Bridenstine stated 22% of District Court cases originated south of Kilgore Road and would be split between the remaining District Courts at Crosstown Parkway and Michigan Avenue. He indicated staff would also be shifted to those locations.

Commissioner Rogers concurred with Commissioner Taylor that \$70,000 for 10 years was too much.

Mr. Ed Sackly City of Portage gave a brief explanation how the \$40,500 was determined. He stated it was his hope the Commissioners would work towards consolidation.

Chair Maturen thanked the City of Portage for coming. He stated this would be on the May 7 Consent Agenda.

3. District Court Request to Reallocate Funds for Sobriety Court

Judge Bridenstine requested the Board approve to use \$150,000 from the closing of the South District Court location as well as the elimination of one District Court judgeship to fund two probation officer positions. He indicated the probation officers would be assigned to District Court Sobriety Court. He stated the approval of this request would mean that the District Court would not need to request funding from the Drug Court Reserve Fund to cover these salaries. Further he indicated, the District Court would remain committed to seek any applicable grants to assist in funding the program. He stated if there were remains of the unused portion of the salaried amount, it would be returned to the County's general fund.

Several Commissioners applauded the District Court for all their hard work and would support this request.

Commissioner Rogers questioned if the \$150,000 was part of the agreement. She stated she also would support this.

Administrator Battani stated in the next budget cycle, the Commissioners would see Sobriety Court would show \$150,000 allocation for this. He stated over the last 2 years the Sobriety Court had went out on their own and developed proposals for funding that had been returned to the County. He also stated District Court doesn't ask for more money and he supports this.

Chair Maturen stated the County was in the lime light with Specialty Courts and supported 100%. He thanked Judge Bridenstine for caring for this program and the due diligence he provided.

4. Health Benefits Consultant Agreement

Mr. Jason Gainsley, HR Director requested approval to partner with Nulty Insurance for the County's health and benefits lines of business. He stated if approved, the agreement would be in place for 3 ½ years.

Commissioners Rogers and Tuinier recommended reviewing in a year.

Discussion ensued.

Several Commissioners stated they would support this request.

Chair Maturen stated this item would be on the May 7 Consent Agenda for approval.

5. Paving of Lamont Street

Corporate Council Thom Canny reviewed his memo as included in the packet. He stated Administration recommended board approval to fund the Township's share of the Lamont Street Improvement Project of \$45,792. The funds for the project would come from the County's Capital Improvement Fund. He stated this would be on this evening's Consent Agenda.

Some discussion ensued.

6. Legislative Agenda

Administrator Battani asked for Legislative Agenda items from the Board.

Commissioner Alford requested Indigent Defense be discussed.

Commissioner Heppler requested revenue sharing be discussed and would like an update on the budget.

Commissioner Seals suggested medicade expansion to be put on the list for discussion.

7. Strategic Planning

Administrator Battani stated based on the discussion at the retreat, he suggested not to schedule strategic planning at this time as there were several significant issues the County would be dealing with over the next several weeks. He stated some issues could be worked into Committee of the Whole for discussion.

Commissioner Rogers would like to receive information in advance on the old strategic plan before the budget process began.

8. Retiree Health Benefits

Ms. Moored reviewed the Post Employment Benefits Retiree Health Insurance information as provided in the packet. She also provided a handout that she reviewed of the Summary of Michigan State University Study.

Discussion ensued.

Commissioner Zull had questioned if discussion had taken place to raise the retirement age.

Commissioner Iden felt the County was on top of this but indicated if things didn't change; the County would be in deep.

Administrator Battani stated there would be no recommendation tonight, that more discussion would take place. He stated a lot of changes needed to be made, and needed to be fair and ethical. He stated they would be looking at funding alternatives. He projected the County would be 2.5 million in the hole in 5 years if nothing was done.

Discussion ensued.

Chair Maturen stated there were a lot of ways to look at the problem. He stated there were a lot of suggestions and exploring to go on.

9. Any other items

There were no other items.

10. Executive Session

Commissioner Seals moved that the Board of Commissioners, functioning as a Committee of the Whole, go into a closed session pursuant to Sections 8 (h) of the Open Meetings Act to consider material exempt from discussion or disclosure by state or federal statute.

The roll call vote was as follows:

Ayes:	All members present
Nays:	None
Abstains:	None
Absent:	None

The motion carried.

The motion carried and the Board moved into executive session at 6:10 p.m. and returned to regular session at 6:22 p.m.

11. Adjournment – no later than 6 p.m.

There being no further business to come before the Board, Chairman Maturen adjourned the meeting at 6:22 p.m.

David C. Maturen, Chairman
Kalamazoo County Board of Commissioners